Post harvest management of farm produce

2150. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how Government propose to solve the structural problems including fall in prices of agricultural commodities and shortage of godowns for storage of surplus foodgrains; and

(b) what concrete steps are being taken by Government on post harvest management of farm produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) The following steps are taken by the Government to solve the problem of fall in prices of agricultural commodities and of shortage of storage space:

Government announces, each season, minimum support prices for major agricultural commodities and organizes purchase operations through public and cooperative agencies. The designated agencies intervene in the market and undertake procurement operations as and when the prices fall below the minimum support price fixed by the Government.

When prices of horticultural commodities of importance fall below the economic levels, the Government of India, at the request of State Governments, launches Market intervention Scheme for that particular commodity and in that particular season to prevent distress sale by farmers.

The government has formulated a National Storage Policy aimed at harnessing the resources of the public and private sector for augmentation of infrastructure to handle foodgrains including construction of bulk storage facilities and also conventional godowns. The total storage capacity available with different public and cooperative sector agencies is 925.71 lakh M.T.

For the creation of new storage capacity, the following further steps are being taken:

(i) Creation of additional storage capacity (estimated at 54 lakh Tonnes) by state Governments, SWC and CWC on the basis of long-term guarantee by FCI.

(ii) Creation of 21 lakh tones capacity for bulk handling, storage and transportation facilities through private sector participation at 11 locations.

(iii) Creation of conventional godowns totaling 5.88 lakh tones through private sector participation at 54 locations in 14 States.

(b) In order to reduce losses to foodgrains during the post-harvest period, the Government of India is implementing the Save Grain Campaign Scheme. The main thrust of this scheme is on training, demonstration and publicity in the field of scientific storage of foodgrains at the farm level. Improvement of grains storage structures, popularization of scientific storage structures and other activities are also carried out under the save Grain Campaign for the benefit of farmers.

The National Horticulture Board (NHB), is implementing the following schemes for strengthening the post-harvest management infrastructure for horticultural produce:—

(i) Capital Investment Subsidy for construction/expansion/ modernization of Cold Storages/Storages for horticulture produce;

(ii) Development of commercial horticulture through production and post harvest management of horticultural products.

These schemes would, *inter-alia*, help in checking losses in weight and quality of agricultural and horticultural produce and thereby ensure benefits to farmers.